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## **LIFELINE® PARTNERSHIPS: COMPLETING THE CIRCLE**

*by Micki Hawes*

*TMI residential programs—especially the graduate programs—do not end with physical departure on Friday. New knowledge must be assimilated and the attendant responsibilities must be integrated. In this letter to Director of Programs Darlene Miller, Micki Hawes shares her discovery that LIFELINE service is a cooperative, interactive venture.*

You trained my first *LIFELINE*. The following happenings are a most surprising extension of that program (with sequels), and living through these events has been an incredible learning experience.

That *LIFELINE* ended on April 30, 1993, and I returned to Cincinnati on Saturday, May 1. I checked my telephone's Caller Identification box. The date a call arrived, the time it came in, and the number and area code were documented. I recognized most of the phone numbers except the last one—a "681" exchange. The last call had been recorded on Friday, April 30, 1993, at 12:53 P.M. My exchange is "231." At that time, the Cincinnati area did not have the caller's name capacity. There had been a tremendous amount of contact and retrieval activity during the week at The Monroe Institute, and I felt satisfying exhaustion. It was time to put the past week in perspective, knowing the program had been a total success for me. The results of the week needed to be integrated into my life. Contacts with the deceased were not new.

Accepting, sharing, and developing—which I had the privilege of exploring at The Monroe Institute—were new. In the past, contacts had usually been spontaneous communications related to relatives and friends. Now others were making contact. It felt fulfilling to have opened to this transmitting partnership.

At first I dismissed the last phone number as a telemarketing call. Then a gnawing feeling that I should call this number persisted. I dialed. A woman answered. I told her a call had been received from her number, when it had been received, and that I wondered who had been trying to contact me. After a moment or so of polite conversation, we concluded it had been a wrong number. I apologized for calling and was about to hang up. Then the woman said she was the one who needed to apologize because the day before she had been very distraught. Her niece had been killed in an automobile accident. She told me the name of her niece, who I will call Helen J. Helen was her actual first name. I learned how old she was, the color of her car, where it happened, how many children she had, where she worked, and the depth of shock and grief to the family. The woman asked me if I had seen the newscast on television. I explained about just returning from Virginia. After a moment of "so sorry," condolences, and

extending prayers, she thanked me for listening to her and explained that sometimes talking to a stranger in a time of grief was comforting. I agreed.

Although exhausted, I knew what I had to do. This contact had been no accident. At that moment I knew contact and retrieval work would continue. I decided to use *Open Exercise*, my favorite tape from the *GATEWAY VOYAGE*<sup>®</sup>. When Bob Monroe's voice said I could do what I had planned to do, I would try to contact Helen J. As the process began I felt nausea and ached all over. My head felt as if it might explode, and I prepared to take off the earphones and rush to the bathroom. What was happening? Instantly I felt calm, relaxed, and as if I was floating. I was not alone. Possibly I had just experienced Helen J.'s transition on impact.

We began a thought communication. *LIFELINE* had taught me to ask questions, get information, and take notes (even if I had to sit up in my CHEC unit). I had to know the best way to volunteer help. Helen J. said she needed to stay near the physical plane for awhile. This was another of my lessons in retrieval work. On the physical level I often assume a control position. Here, there are choices and decisions to be made by the entity and it is totally a partnership. The other's position must be respected. I asked Helen J. if she knew she had died. She said she did know. She told me she was not ready to go on because she had to stay and help those grieving. Since then, other contact and retrieval situations have shown that this is not unusual.

Through thought communication I again offered to help her go on. She said she appreciated it, but she was not ready yet. Feeling dispensable, I asked how to tell when she was ready. Choices beyond this life were a new lesson. I was informed that there would be another phone call. After the tape ended and I pondered it all, the notion of receiving another phone call was preposterous. I went on to other things—in gratitude that the phone number had connected me with Helen J.—vowing to myself to try to stay open. There are so many unanticipated surprises, aren't there?

At 11:13 A.M. on Thursday, May 27, 1993, the phone rang. I was in the family room, away from the Caller I.D. unit. I answered immediately and heard a distance sound. Since many of my calls are from Ireland, there is often a delay between my answering hello and the caller's greeting. After about five "Hello's," there was still no reply or hang up. I waited and thought perhaps another salutation would convince the caller my answering machine was not on. "Good Morning! This is me, not the answering machine." Nothing! Reluctantly, I hung up. Later that day another call was received. I looked at the previous phone number and it was vaguely familiar. The exchange was "681." Yes, I had received another phone call! Let me add that the last four digits of that phone number have no resemblance to my own number. They are totally different. I made contact with Helen J. She was ready to go on. By thought communication during the tape she said she could have gone on by herself. Now I certainly felt dispensable.

At the same time, I realized integrity had prevailed. Helen J. promised she would contact. She did! Amazing!

In this sensitive nonverbal communication time (and I am not sure where the following information came from), I learned that for myself all contact had to be a mutual cooperative endeavor. I was finding out that each contact was totally unique. No additional phone calls came in between May 1993 and January 1996. I felt satisfaction with the closure. This was the end. I was wrong. There was more to come.

On Sunday, January 28, 1996, just as I was dozing off in preparation for a good night's sleep, four faces flashed in front of me—the face of a childhood friend, my beloved deceased grandmother Anna, Aunt Sarah who I so miss, and the face of an unfamiliar woman. I asked, “Who are you?” The answer came back, “Helen J.” The faces disappeared. In that fleeting moment of communication, I understood that once contact is made it may be forever. That first *LIFELINE* sparked a new level of interchange and a new acquaintanceship tier. The second *LIFELINE* was a totally different but equally powerful and effective learning expansion. Contact and retrieval work continues. I had to tell you.

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